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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, August 24, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "KITCHEN THRIFT NOTES." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Some of the thriftiest cooks -- housewives who save every scrap in the kitchen and pinch every penny at the market, who argue over prices and look for bargains by the hour, are the most wasteful and extravagant of food values. If they could only see what they are wasting -- but that's the trouble. Some of the most valuable parts of food aren't visible. You can't see the vitamins in food, or the minerals, or the flavor. But if you're truly economical, you learn to buy, care for, and cook food so that you save all three.

Take such foods as lettuce, cabbage and celery. When most women make a lettuce salad, they begin by throwing away the outer green leaves and using only the pale bleached inner leaves. Yet those outer leaves are as much as 30 or 40 times as rich in vitamin A. And vitamin A is too valuable to waste. Far too many people aren't getting enough of it to keep in best health. Others are buying concentrates of it in tablet form to build themselves up.

Did you ever watch a grocer fix up a head of new cabbage for sale? The first thing he does is to pull off the deep green outer leaves. What he doesn't take off, you probably do when you get the cabbage home -- or when you bring it in from the garden. Yet those outer leaves are much richer in A than the white inner leaves that most people consider so choice. As for celery, few people cherish the outer green stalks, and fewer still the green leaves. Yet these have more food value than the tender white hearts.

Speaking of vitamin A, here's another thrift tip. When you have a choice between a yellow or white variety of fruit or vegetable, the yellow variety is the bargain. Yellow peaches are good sources of vitamin A while white peaches are only fair sources. Yellow melons are richer in A than pale melons, yellow turnips than white turnips, and yellow corn than white corn. Yellow color is the guide to vitamin A. And as green is made up partly of yellow, green is also a guide. The deeper the color, the richer the vitamins--usually.

But A is not the only vitamin often sadly needed and sadly wasted. C is another. C is a vitamin that many people run low on, especially in winter. Many a fresh food comes from the garden rich in C and often in A, only to lose much of its value by standing all day on the grocery counter or on the kitchen table. The faster fruits and vegetables go from the garden to the kettle or the dining table, the better. But if they must wait, the refrigerator is the place for them, since destruction of vitamins by oxidation goes on very slowly in a cold place.



The forchanded housewife who shells the beans and peas bright and early in the morning and then lets them wait all day before cooking may be saving time, but she's losing vitamins and fine fresh flavor. The same is true of the time-saving housewife who buys her peas and lima beans already shelled at the market. She would get much more value for her money if she bought them in their shells and kept them that way until just before cooking.

Exposing fresh foods to the air for any length of time is a sure way of wasting vitamins. So if you're thrifty you won't squeeze your breakfast orange juice the night before, or make your fruit punch long ahead of the picnic. And you won't hull sweet corn or shred carrots and cabbage until just before dinner.

Another extravagant practice is preparing foods early in the day and letting them stand in water for hours. Some of the minerals as well as vitamins B, C, and G are soluble in water. This is a certain method of drawing these soluble substances out, to say nothing of drawing out flavor. But I've seen many a housewife soak peeled potatoes all day as well as sliced peaches, sliced apples and even pieces of raw chicken or other raw meat. Of course, potatoes, peaches and apples turn dark after they are cut unless you put them in water. But it's sadly wasteful to leave them in water long. As for chicken or other meat, if it needs cleaning, scrape it or even rub it with a clean moist cloth but avoid soaking it since that draws out flavor and protein.

The water-soluble vitamins and minerals are inclined to dissolve in the cooking water, too. Which is one reason the food scientists now make such a point of cooking fruits and vegetables in the least possible time and a small amount of water, and why they also advise serving that water on the vegetables or using it in soups or sauces. It is important to have the water boiling vigorously and to add the vegetables slowly so not to stop the boiling. This helps save the vitamins that are destroyed by the action of oxygen and heat together. There are still misguided cooks who boil their cabbage for hours and their peas anywhere from twenty minutes up. They are often <sup>the</sup> women who complain that their families have poor appetites, and just won't eat vegetables. This long, long cooking wastes vitamins, green color, fine fresh flavor, to say nothing of fuel. The economical cook knows that fresh young peas are most delicious boiled only 5 to 8 minutes and that shredded cabbage may not even need that much time.

Speaking of color reminds me of soda. In cooking vegetables the only thing that soda saves is green color. It destroys vitamins, fresh texture and taste. You can draw your own conclusions as to whether using it is thrifty, especially since rapid cooking with the lid off the kettle saves the color anyway.

We Americans would get more food value for our money if we weren't so refined in our choices, if we liked foods more nearly in their natural state. We like light-colored table sirups, white sugar and white flour. So we often run shy on the iron that dark molasses or brown sugar would provide and on the vitamin B that whole grains provide. We're likely to select cuts of meat all trimmed and boned at the market when we would get better value and usually flavor if the bones were left in. And we're likely to pass up the most valuable meats of all--the internal organs like liver, heart, kidneys and brains. Nutritionists at the Wisconsin Experiment Station recently announced: "Better nutrition would follow if modern folks would return to the meat-eating habits of the pioneers who made use of virtually the whole carcass when they butchered an animal."

